

ToughTimes

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Vol. 7 No. 1/January-February, 2018



V for Victory sign from two supporters of a better deal for people who need help
(Photo supplied)

How to get more money for a better life

NEW DEMOCRAT MPP WANTS RESEARCH

MPP Paul Miller has told the Ontario Legislature:

"Rates for Ontario Works and ODSP fall hundreds of dollars behind the costs of shelter, food, hygiene products, clothing or other essentials in Ontario communities".

Nothing new there. Everybody trying to live on any form of social assistance knows that the money is not enough.

But New Democrat Miller is trying to do something about it.

He has introduced a Bill in the Legislature, asking Queen's Park to set up a Social Assistance Research Commission to find out how much individuals and families need where they live, how much services and

goods cost in their geographic area.

On the "essentials" list are expenses such as:

Food, shelter, transportation, phone, internet, clothing, personal hygiene, household cleaning, educational and recreational items for children, plus inescapable extra costs that we all encounter from time to time.

He wants his Research Commission to suggest and price:

- a nutritious food basket appropriate to the individual or family;
- shelter costs, based on research into local rental rates;
- transportation — many small towns don't have buses, and a car is a must-have to get to work or anywhere else;

See Research required on page 4

TELLING IT LIKE IT IS

What do YOU think about welfare?

Peel Poverty Action Group, *Tough Times*, and Brampton soup kitchen Knights Table, jointly hosted a meeting for people with lived experience of poverty.

The task: find out what people living in poverty think about living in poverty. Can the Ontario government do a better

job of helping them? Or is everything OK?

It's the Ontario government that wants to know.

This report has been sent to the Ministry of Community and Social Services, in part as a response to the Ministry's publication online at

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/income-security-reform>

About 20 people took part in the Knights Table meeting, including three people currently living in shelters, others regularly dining at soup kitchens in Brampton (there isn't a soup kitchen in

See Social welfare on page 5

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Knights Table wishes all its diners and friends
ALL THE BEST FOR 2018

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PEEL POVERTY ACTION GROUP

Peel Poverty Action Group (PPAG) is open to every individual and organization in Peel Region that cares about what poverty does to people. It provides a safe place where people who are cash-poor and those who try to help them are encouraged to speak out – and *Tough Times* is part of that safe place.

The Group's mandate is to advocate for people in need and to educate the public about poverty issues. Membership is free. PPAG meets at 9:30 a.m. the second Thursday of every month (except July and August) alternately in Mississauga at the Newcomer Centre of Peel, 165 Dundas St. W., at Confederation Parkway; in Brampton at the John Howard Society, 134 Main St. N., just north of the railway bridge..

Meetings for 2018

Brampton: January 11, March 8, May 10

Mississauga: February 8, April 12, June 14.

www.ppag.wordpress.com

Homeless: The Video

Spaces and Places: Uncovering Homelessness in the Region of Peel is a 15-minute video in which homeless people describe their experiences. A team from PPAG, including a once-homeless person, will show the video to a group on request. There is no charge. To book a showing contact ppagactiongroup@gmail.com. Allow about 45 minutes for the video and discussion.

The video was made by a team from York University, in cooperation with the Social Planning Council of Peel, financed by a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

You can buy *Spaces and Places* on a memory stick for \$50. Email ppagactiongroup@gmail.com or phone 905 826-5041.



Cartoonist Todd Foster sees a "Coming Storm" in the way income does not provide essentials for people in need. Many of those in need have jobs but can't cover family responsibilities, or plan ahead.

Phoning for a trained brain

Lifelong learning is an idea whose time has come.

Schoolage children in Canada, plus their parents, business people, union members, and workers everywhere, are attached to mobile phones for much of their waking hours.

Learning can range from what's on Facebook to what's on TV, to what's on somebody else's mind. And also to what's required for a university degree.

Anybody worried about cash-poor young people being denied university education, or not being able to afford required textbooks, should try <https://open.bc-campus.ca/find-open-textbooks/>

This is where a small number of textbooks (229 at recent count) can be used for free. The textbooks originate from Canadian sources or are adapted for Canadian use. Also accessible: large numbers of textbooks from U.S. and other educational sources.

First on the alphabetical Canadian list: *Ancillary Resource: Sim Labs for Thermodynamics and Thermal Power Plant Simulator*. Sound intimidating? *Tough Times* settled for *Sociology*, and found *Introduction to Sociology - 2nd Canadian Edition*, edited by William Little of Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops. Standard intro to the topic, easy to read.

BRIEFS

Mental health videos

Peel Poverty Action Group (PPAG) plans to make a video about mental health issues in Peel.

People with experience in mental health, as client or counsellor or other, are invited to participate.

The video group needs people with administrative skills, technical know-how, or who want to learn video production; plus skilled fundraisers able to take on the task of bringing in about \$20,000.

To join the group and for more information, email Peel.Stories@gmail.com

Studio 89

Studio 89 at #104 - 1065 Canadian Place, Mississauga, offers free meeting places to all kinds of organizations, from Life With Baby for new or old mothers, to real estate people talking shop. It's a non-profit. It's thinking of moving closer to mid-town Mississauga. Phone 647-400-0455

Soup kitchen for Mississauga

Knights Table, the first seven-days-a-week soup kitchen in Brampton, is working on establishing a soup kitchen in Mississauga. Areas under consideration include Dixie-Bloor, Hurontario-Dundas, Lakeshore-Cawthra, Hurontario-Central Parkway East — and that's just the beginning. The new souperie will need about 10,000 sq.ft., must be on bus routes. Want to help? E-mail volunteers@knightstable.org or phone 905-454-8725. Make clear you are interested in the Mississauga venue.

ToughTimes

Tough Times is published six times a year

Next issue: March-April, 2018
Deadline for ads and editorial: February 1, 2018

All deadlines are the first day of the preceding month:
May-June, 2018: April 1
July-August, 2018: June 1
September-October: August 1

Phone 905-826-5041

Volunteer writers, reporters, artists, cartoonists, photographers, are welcome at *Tough Times*.

Please email letters to:

toughtimestabloid@gmail.com

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Printed by: Atlantic Web Printers

Advertising Rates

Tough Times distributes 10,000 copies, throughout Peel Region.

Target audience is people experiencing homelessness, using food banks and soup kitchens, people who are struggling, plus faith groups, social service agencies, trades unions, business people, and the general public.

To advertise in Tough Times:

toughtimestabloid@gmail.com

Phone: 905 826-5041

Mail address: 4 - 287 Glidden Road
Brampton ON L6W 1H9, Canada

Advertising rates: (colour included)

Business card: \$90

1/16 page: \$100

1/8 page: \$155

1/4 page: \$240

1/2 page: \$430

3/4 page: \$600

Full page: \$755

A full page is approximately 10 inches wide by 12 inches deep = 120 square inches. E&OE



Knights Table's mystery Chief

This is an oil painting given to Peel soup kitchen Knights Table, and research is under way to find the painting's history, when Knights Table received it, from whom, and in what circumstances.

The painting was in storage for years, along with food and supplies used by Knights Table's kitchen and by people needing its food bank. That's a lot of storage, because Knights Table serves three meals a day, 365 days a year to people who

The painting is known as *The Chief*, the painter is Mitson, a relatively well-known artist, whose history is also being studied.

would otherwise go hungry, and it operates a weekly food bank.

Sometime in the past, the painting hung in a Knights Table dining

room, though not the current address on Glidden Road. We know because there's a hole in it for hook or nail.

Quick research reveals the painting is known as *The Chief*, the painter is Mitson, a relatively well-known artist, whose history is also being studied.

Medals and markings on the painting show that *The Chief* served in World War 1.

Anybody with information about the painting and its history please contact Tough Times, toughtimestabloid@gmail.com

THE BITTER PILL

Unable to pay for prescription drugs....

BY EDESIRI UDOH

As humans, we must make choices from the moment we wake up.

Such as what to wear? Amongst other decisions.

Unfortunately, people who cannot afford prescription medications face a different set of choices: what to forego in order to get the medication they need.

"Do I refill my prescription or pay my bills?"

"Do I pay for my medication or put food on the table?"

No one should have to make these choices. But they must, because Canada does not yet have a universal pharmacare plan.

WellFort is a non-profit organization providing health promotion and prevention programs, primary and oral

health care, working with local residents and other agencies. In Peel it includes Bloom Clinic, Bramalea Community Health Centre, Diabetes Education Program, Four Corners Health Centre, and Health n' Smiles.

WellFort is campaigning for universal pharmacare, which would reduce health complications faced by clients unable to access medications when needed.

With a provincial election announced for June 7, and the federal election set for October 21, 2019, policy makers have an opportunity to push for universal pharmacare for all Canadians.

To keep pharmacare on the policy makers' radar, WellFort has launched a #PHARMACAREFORALL campaign.

Individuals, local groups, and organizations are invited to raise public and

political awareness of the issue through using WellFort's website at <https://universalpharmacare.wixsite.com/ontario> to share Pharmacareforall posters, signing an online petition.

If you don't have access to the internet, gather signatures on a paper petition and talk to your local MPP.

Connect with WellFort:

Edesiri Udoh, Health Promoter

Edesiri.udoh@wellfort.ca

Phone: 905-451-8090 ext 122

Though many people can't afford the drugs prescribed for them, the numbers are slowly decreasing.

For instance:

Ontario Drug Benefit Program:

People 65+ with income above a set amount, pay \$100 deductible each year, then \$6 per prescription; with income

at or below the cut-off, payments are \$2 per prescription.

Under 65s who are in Home Care, Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program, or Trillium Drug Program, pay \$2 per prescription.

There's a huge gap for those precariously employed who don't qualify for the Ontario Drug Benefit. And even for those who qualify, payments add up.

Trillium Drug Benefit: Patients who have spent 3% to 4% or more of their after-tax household income on prescription drugs, then pay \$2 per drug per person for each refill.

OHIP +: Children and Youth Pharmacare:

Effective January 2018, everybody 24 years and under, including children, will be covered for the same drugs provided by Ontario Drug Benefit, plus other common childhood medications.

NEED FOOD?

غذا درکار ہے؟
 ਭੋਜਨ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ?
 需要食物吗?
 Cần thực phẩm?
 هل تحتاج إلى الطعام?
 ¿Necesita comida?



Don't Go Hungry

If you don't have enough money for food and live in Mississauga, you can go to a neighbourhood food bank.

It doesn't matter about your age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, or immigration status. You will receive enough healthy food to feed your family for 7-10 days each month. There is no cost to visit a food bank.

Find your food bank at
www.themississaugafoodbank.org
 or phone 905.270.5589.



WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP BILL 6 HELP YOU

When MPP Paul Miller presented Bill 6 in the Ontario Legislature back in 2016, it had the support not only of Miller's New Democratic Party but of representatives of every political party in the House.

With all that approval, why is nothing happening? The Bill is before a Standing Committee which has no plans to deal with it, and it will die with the election. The research that Miller is urging won't be done and hand-to-mouth politics will continue.

Whether you are trapped in social welfare of not, you have an interest in an Ontario where people are housed and fed and secure.

So phone your local MPPs. Tell them that Miller's plan is a good one and needs to become law.

Point out that the election slated for June 7 still leaves time to get a better deal for Ontario citizens struggling with poverty.

Phone every MPP – most are seeking re-election – and tell them that people on social welfare need help – money, shelter, a secure future.

Just for the record, MPPs minimum wage is \$116,550 – seven times more than a single mom with two children gets to keep her family housed, and fed, and clothed.

Peel numbers to call:

Vic Dhillon in Brampton West

905-796-8669

Harinder Malhi in Brampton Springdale

905-495-8030

Sylvia Jones in Dufferin-Caledon

519-941-7751

Dipika Damerla in Mississauga East-Cooksville

905-238-1751

Charles Sousa in Mississauga South

905-274-8228

Amrit Mangat in Mississauga-Brampton South

905 696-0367

Harinder Takhar in Mississauga-Erindale

905-897-8815

Bob Delaney in Mississauga-Streetsville

905-569-1643

Changes in constituency boundaries take effect in the election, including new ridings in Peel. Watch for details.

Get those phone calls ringing. Tell your MPPs that they must take better care of people needing help. They may need help themselves one day. Maybe some day soon.

Research required, cont. from page 1

- *basic phone service;*
- *internet access;*
- *clothing, which varies according to climate in the place where you live;*
- *personal needs, including personal hygiene products;*
- *household cleaning supplies;*
- *items and services relating to the educational and recreational needs of children;*
- *any other expenses that the Commission considers necessities.*

Miller also wants an analysis of additional expenses that may be incurred by individuals living with disabilities, "to enable them to participate fully in society, including but not limited to expenses related to education, transportation, over-the-counter medical goods, entertainment, clothing, modifying a rental unit to accommodate a disability, or renting a unit that is modified to accommodate a disability;"

Plus Miller wants analysis of additional expenses that may be incurred by recipients of benefits under the *Ontario Works Act, 1997* who face long term barriers to employment, and an examination of



Paul Miller, MPP (Photo supplied)

other statutory benefits for which recipients of provincial social assistance are eligible.

So who should serve on the Social Assistance Research Commission?

Miller is clear on this:

Nine people who understand socio-economic policy and research about poverty in Ontario, and know about the cost of living and its variations in Ontario communities and who have general knowledge about research into the challenges faced by members of vulnerable groups living in poverty, including those faced by women, youth, members of ra-

cialized communities, individuals with disabilities, native peoples, immigrants, refugees and injured workers.

Miller wants people who've lived with poverty and its problems to work on changing social assistance.

He wants Commissioners to include:

"At least two individuals with specific expertise in the economic and financial challenges faced by individuals living with disabilities" which means two people who have disabilities;

At least one aboriginal;

At least one individual who is or has been on OW (Ontario Works);

At least one individual who is or has been on ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program).

Their job will be to tell the Minister of Community and Social Services how much money and what services social assistance ought to provide.

The Minister's job (among others) will be to tell us what is in their Report – and hopefully put money into his response.

ReelYouth

Reel Youth is a youth media empowerment organization, which means young people try new things in the way of good works.

In Peel, Reel Youth works with Regeneration at Grace United Church to create documentaries. Topic chosen: seniors experiencing homelessness in Brampton.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation put up seed money for what the young people see as an issue approaching crisis proportions as Ontario's population ages, and housing becomes more expensive and scarce here in Peel.

Reel Youth joins with Regeneration and other supporters in inviting the public to the premieres of five of their films about local seniors experiencing homelessness. Premiere takes place at Grace United Church, 156 Main Street North, Brampton, at 6.30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 24, 2018.

You are also invited to a reception after the screening to meet the moviemakers and the stars – and perhaps join efforts to solve the problems of being old and being homeless..

Email angela@itsnotjustpieinthesky.com so Reel Youth knows you are coming.



When young folk take on a project, they all join in. A video on homelessness or close to it among elderly people found ready volunteers at ReelYouth. Pointing the camera is Joshua Boxill, the young lady with the A is Lorna Phan, while Brooke Pilloud is seated.

(Photo by Mark Vonesch)

Social welfare, cont. from page 1

Mississauga, but Knights Table is working on that), others using food banks, all having a hard time. Also included are comments made to Tough Times by individuals on the street, dining at Knights Table or at Regeneration Brampton.

How much money is enough to live on? The government asks how can a sum be determined, and (only politicians know the answer to this one) can it be available by 2027? A question from the audience: Why wait for 2027?

Rent is the most important need.

Among the comments:

Private landlords can put the rent up – and that is happening a lot now.

You need three jobs to eat and to have a place to live.

If you complain to the authorities that the place is not in good repair, the landlord kicks you out.

Rental places should be inspected regularly whether there is a complaint or not. If people get a rent subsidy that is paid for from taxes, then the public has a right to know that there's value for money.

All low-income people in the GTA need help with rent, not just those on OW or ODSP or some other form of welfare.

The minimum wage is going up. So landlords will charge more.

If the minimum wage goes up, the number of jobs will go down.

Rent allowances need to be portable, not where you have to find another place and not know in advance how much help you will get with rent.

Social assistance payments are not enough. I'm a woman with two children to care for. Rent is \$800. I need more than \$1,000 to live.

You may have to pay \$500 for a room without cooking or laundry. That's \$500 out of \$721.

Health care: I suppose we should be grateful for prescriptions being paid for young people and partly-paid for people on pension. But tooth care is more important and we don't get help with that. The Region of Peel has a plan to help old people with dental problems, but you can only use it once and there's no follow-up.

My denture broke and I can't get it fixed.

There's no help for getting glasses. If you can't see you can't work, you can't read, and it's dangerous on the street.

Social assistance is not enough. It's impossible to own your own home. If I had to work three jobs I would. Rent is insane.

We should get tutoring for kids who are behind in school. Some of the older kids doing community hours, could be helping younger kids... these older kids would make better parents when they have kids of their own.

Seniors should be paid for the work they do as volunteers – visiting people in their homes, helping them with laundry. If you only have a pension, there's nothing left.



Everything is changing. **Jobs are disappearing** – self-serve checkouts for instance destroy jobs.

Canada could be the **richest country in the world**. We have every resource.

We need more money, more than once a month. Money should be put in our bank accounts every two weeks. **Rents should be paid directly to the landlord** by the social assistance office. Rent controls should be introduced, supervised by a third party.

My bank **refused to open an account** for a guy because he was a bank robber.

It should be easier to get in touch with your social worker.

Addicts get more attention and more treatment. More money is spent on them and much of it is wasted. Many of them don't overcome their addictions and are back in shelters after a few months. It would make more sense to **help people who are not**

addicts, who are trapped in poverty and just need a helping hand to get out. Once out, they will stay out. That's success.

There are no services for adults with **physical disabilities** who fall on hard times and who are not mentally disabled. They need help to find a place to live, especially if they need a wheelchair.

There is **only one shelter space** in all of Peel for a woman needing a wheelchair-accessible shelter. There are two accessible shelter spots for men. With an aging population, more wheelchair-accessible housing is needed, including shelters.

Children leaving the care of the Children's Aid Society need more help. Statement: "**They kicked him out** two months before graduation."

Street Help is no use. It is funded by the Region of Peel. I got a half-hour interview, but no help.

No support or help to find a shelter.

Shelter staff are no help. They just want to kick you out.

Not enough units for disabled.

You should be able to share information about your landlord or employer without **fear of reprisal**.

You need help filling in ODSP forms.

ODSP should be re-designed. You need an assured income.

I spent a year in Toronto which has a zero vacancy rate.

We have homeless people in the GTA, but thousands of housing units are vacant.

15% of units approved for development should be low rent units. The province must provide more money.

Homeless people are not bad people, it's just bad luck. But they have us evicted.

Income tax: When you are working, **income tax claw-back begins at \$16,000**. That threshold is too low.

We need **benefits for adult children**.

Dentures for everybody on social assistance who needs them. Same for **glasses**. Same for **hearing aids**.

Some caseworkers and paycheque people don't care about you. Others tell you about all the benefits you could be getting.

We need more shelters and more services – the services are important.

Peel Aboriginal Network (PAN) reports these comments from its members:

We didn't know our rights as tenants.

It is so hard raising children in an unstable environment.

Food banks are a necessity in our lives.

The rules don't seem fair. Due to government rules, our family could not live together in the same unit.

We seem to be moving from one temporary place to another.

Peel District School Board –
905-890-1010 – and Dufferin-Peel
 Catholic District School Board –
905-890-1221 – report at least some
 of the 40 hours community service
 required to graduate can be
 dedicated to tutoring younger
 children. There are applications to
 be made, jobs to be posted, rou-
 tines to follow, but it can be done.
 Check with the school board.

Replies are invited to this article. Email to toughimestab-loid@gmail.com or mail to Tough Times, Unit 4 -- 287 Glidden Road, Brampton, ON L6W 1H9

BY NAVI AUJLA

The Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act (Bill 148) is an historic win for workers across Ontario.

Finally, outdated labour laws have been reviewed and modernized.

Our laws have not reflected our reality of work for decades. Employers have found many ways to reduce their costs while simultaneously increasing uncertainty for their employees.

Risks that included misclassification of workers as independent contractors; exemptions in the Employment Standards Act for things like minimum wage and overtime pay; the use of part-time, temporary and casual positions to pay less and not provide benefits; and other unfair dealings.

These exploitive rules have meant that workers, especially racialized employees, immigrants, women, and low-income workers, have been left behind, and the gap between the rich and poor has grown. Bill 148 is not quite enough, but it has started to address many of these issues.

More importantly, this Act demonstrates that the struggles of workers in Ontario are no longer deniable, and that change is truly possible when we organize and fight.

Some of the key wins in Fair Workplaces (Bill 148):

a \$14 minimum wage starting January 2018, and a \$15 minimum wage in January 2019;

ten (10) personal emergency leave days for all workers, two of which will be paid -- accessible after one week on a job;

new scheduling provisions that include the right to refuse a shift scheduled within four days, and three hours pay for a shift cancelled within 48 hours;



Navi Aujla of the Workers Action Centre leads a demonstration in support of Teamsters Local 419, on strike for 10 weeks at Pearson International Airport in Mississauga this summer. Baggage handlers for Swissport at Pearson struck over cuts in pay and benefits, scheduling issues, and "lack of respect from managers." (Photo supplied)

While Bill 148 is a victory for us and a sign of what can be achieved through tireless organizing, the fight is not over.

it will be easier now for some sectors of workers to unionize;

equal pay for equal work, which means that workers employed through temp agencies, or part-time, or on a contract, will be paid the same as their permanent counterparts doing the same work (with some exceptions for things like seniority and merit-based systems). These wins are just some of the few, and they will be significant for many workers.

The \$15 and Fairness campaign has come a long way.

While Bill 148 is a victory for us and a sign of what can be achieved through tireless organizing, the fight is not over.

Many exemptions still exist in the Employment Standards Act that exclude workers from accessing the most basic rights. We must make sure that every worker is covered and that no one is left behind.

We also need to ensure that the lan-

guage in Bill 148 is not just words on paper. Finally, we need to make sure that no matter what government is elected in June 2018, they know that they cannot touch or take away any of these wins. This includes the Conservative caucus which voted against Bill 148 and has stated that if elected, it will not implement a \$15 minimum wage until 2022.

The Brampton Chapter of the \$15 and Fairness movement has been active for almost two years. It collected over 2,000 signatures on petitions, lobbied local MPPs, built a local committee, appeared on TV, radio, and in print media, and held many local events to raise awareness.

In particular, the Brampton Chapter focussed on temporary employment agencies. About 1,700 temporary employment agencies are located in the GTA alone, more than the number of agencies combined in seven other provinces. The Chapter focussed on raising awareness and collecting stories of temp agency workers and their experiences.

While the equal pay provision in Bill 148 will help temp agency workers in terms of income security, and reducing misuse of temp workers, more changes are needed.

The Brampton Chapter of \$15 and Fairness will continue to push for better working conditions, including that temp agency workers must be directly hired after three months on an assignment. And we will continue to push for client companies to be held jointly liable if a temp agency worker is injured on the job.

Navi Aujla is part of the Workers Action Centre, struggling to get better labour laws in Peel and elsewhere. Want to help? Phone Navi at (416) 837-3871

Hepatitis C Treatment, Care & Support Is Available

You can be at risk if:

- Sharing of personal care and hygiene items such as razors, toothbrushes, clippers and scissors with someone living with hepatitis C
- Sharing needles used for body tattoos and piercings. Reusing and sharing tattoo ink and ink pots
- Sharing drug equipment such as needles, filters, tourniquets, water, syringes, cookers, alcohol swabs, acidifiers
- Receive blood and body organs that have not been screened for hepatitis C. Even in Canada, if you received blood and organ donations before 1990 you may be at risk.
- Involved in medical procedures including immunization in hepatitis C endemic countries



Bloom Clinic

Contact:

Bloom Clinic
40 Finchgate Blvd. Suite 224, Brampton, ON L6T 3J1
Phone: 905-451-6959 | mail@bramaleachc.ca



*Call today for information or
to book a free test.*

Healthy Family Relationships and Positive Parenting

Based on presentations by several social workers at the MLAG Centre for Diverse Women and Families

BY FARIDA SALAHUDDIN

The family is an integral part of our daily lives and a necessary component of our general well-being. It is what improves and shapes our overall personality.

It teaches us the value of love, affection, truthfulness, and it builds our self-confidence.

It is a place where we can be ourselves, free from terms and conditions in a stress-free environment.

It is a place where we draw our strength during tough times and adds pleasure to our lives.

Some of the characteristics of healthy family relationships are:

- **Communication:** Engaging in two-way open communication that builds understanding, patience, and love. This involves being honest, being intent on understanding the other person's thoughts and emotions, listening attentively to the other person, allowing the expression of negative or positive emotions, and working together to resolve problems and conflicts.
- **Sharing Activities:** Spending time together by utilizing dinnertime for family discussions, including children in the family's decision-making process, and engaging in lively activities and holidays catering to the whole family.
- **Togetherness:** Sharing beliefs, celebrating and sharing memories together make the home an enjoyable place, where everyone wants to come back.
- **Support:** Looking out for one another and sharing tasks and burdens. It also means respecting and encouraging each other with praise rather than criticism.
- **Affection:** Family members need to reassure one another of how much they are loved in both words and actions. To foster affection family members should do things for one another, make time for each other, and always consider the other person's feelings.
- **Acceptance:** Families are made up of different individuals having

unique needs, and sometimes different values and beliefs. Healthy families can accept the individual differences, give each other space, respect other's points of view, and forgive each other.

- **Commitment:** Families demonstrate a commitment to each other by creating a safe and secure home environment, maintaining honesty, trust, and honouring promises in the relationship.



A portrait of a mother and her two sons, by Hilda Fearon, 1911 (Wikimedia Commons)

- **Flexibility:** Strong families can talk things through and change plans when necessary. They pull together as one in a crisis, and discuss and resolve problems as they arise.

Symptoms of Unhealthy Relationships

One of the critical features of an unhealthy relationship is unequal distribution of power between the spouses, with one person holding all the authority and making all the major decisions in the household.

The suppressed member feels controlled by the other person and is unable to express feelings as they feel afraid

and unsafe. Abuse may be emotional, physical, or economic. Most often communication is one-sided, and a general lack of respect is evident. The abuser tends to rely on negative forms of communication such as yelling, criticizing, and may use physical punishment like smacking or hitting as the primary forms of discipline. The abused person often feels belittled and feels liberated only when the abuser leaves the physical space.

Emotional Effects

Feelings of guilt, shame, anger, fear, low self-esteem and learning problems. They also feel afraid to express their feelings.

Behavioral Effects

Violent and aggressive behavior, use of abusive language, difficulty concentrating, being withdrawn and isolated and unable to socialize.

Positive Parenting:

Good parenting is all about providing a warm, secure, home life by helping a child learn necessary moral skills and rules while building self-esteem along the way. Any discipline should be practiced with love, patience, and understanding. As well, parents should support their children to do the things that will allow them to learn and explore.

Children who experience firm, loving and balanced relationships in their families are more likely to have higher self-esteem, social skills, and more stable friendships.

They will also have better learning abilities, fewer behavioural problems, and are less likely to abuse others or to tolerate abuse, or turn to gangs, drugs, or sex to feel powerful or to belong.

Parents must show appreciation and encouragement through words and affection with their children. Communication is important and a child's opinions and thoughts should be allowed free expression. Listening requires that distractions be reduced and eye contact be maintained. As well, when assigning tasks to younger children, break complicated tasks down into smaller steps for children to execute one at a time.

"Parents are the ultimate role models for children. Every word, movement, and action has an effect. No other person or outside force has a greater influence on a child than the parent." (Bob Keeshan, an American child television producer and actor.)

The MLAG Centre for Diverse Women and Families, in collaboration with the HEAL Network (Helping End Abuse for Life) delivers workshops about Healthy Family Relationships and Positive Parenting. The workshops are available in Arabic, Urdu, Spanish and English. Contact MLAG at (905) 270-6252 or email info@miag.ca or at the website: www.mlag.ca

The longer an unhealthy relationship continues the more damaging it is. Some of the serious long-term effects of remaining in a dysfunctional relationship include the gradual, but steady loss of one's sense of self-worth and self-esteem.

Children living in an unhealthy home environment can experience these symptoms:

Physical and Mental Effects

Frequent headaches and stomach-aches, fatigue, lethargy, poor personal hygiene, nervousness, anxiety, irritability, helplessness, depression, and demanding behaviour. A child may also regress to earlier developmental stages.

A right to housing

...BUT HOW FAR WILL THE MONEY GO?



MICHELLE BILEK
Peel Alliance to
End Homelessness

The National Housing Strategy (NHS) represents the long-awaited return of the federal government to housing leadership. The NHS sets out some ambitious goals (including reducing chronic homelessness by 50%), outlines new housing programs, and puts in place several important policy measures.

Good news includes:

- \$40 billion investment;
- The Right to Housing embedded through legislation;
- A commitment to repair 300,000 units of social housing;
- A commitment to build 100,000 units of new affordable housing;
- A commitment to protect 385,000 households living in social housing facing loss of subsidy;
- An 11-year, \$2.3 billion renewal of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy;
- A \$4.3 billion Canada Housing Benefit program to support up to 300,000 Canadians facing housing affordability challenges;
- A commitment to a distinct

Indigenous housing strategy with additional funding.

However, there are some real challenges within the strategy. My core concern is that the way the strategy is presented it is very hard to see how Canadians in greatest need will be served and no clear sense of how the government plans to achieve its ending-homelessness goals.

Some of the challenges include:

- The chronic homelessness target is based on an estimate of chronic shelter use only, which means it almost certainly underestimates the challenge;
- 100,000 units of housing feels like wishful thinking – not sure how they will reach that goal;
- Most of the new money comes into play after the next federal election in 2020;
- Most of the funding is allocated to existing housing for repair, plus protecting households facing loss of subsidy with the expiry of operating agreements;
- The new housing will largely be delivered through the provinces or the Co-Investment Fund (which requires provincial or municipal matching and will be cumbersome and slow). There are also many

competing priorities for this funding (e.g. 'local priorities', women's shelters, seniors housing, housing for people with developmental disabilities) meaning a little bit of money will get spread thinly over more than a decade;

- The CMHC affordability measure remains at 80% of average market rent, which remains unaffordable for people experiencing homelessness (this may be alleviated by stacking housing benefit subsidies);
- The Canada Housing Benefit program prioritizes people living in 'community housing' (affordable housing), people living in social housing and on waiting lists. It doesn't focus on our most vulnerable homeless.

Where there are challenges, there are always opportunities. For example:

- The money is there to meet or exceed the government's commitment to cut chronic homelessness in half;
- Many of the key building blocks could help prevent and reduce homelessness if we can influence their design and implementation;
- The government does not appear to know how it will meet its homelessness objectives so it will rely on

sector expertise;

- Several accountability and quality improvement mechanisms are built into the strategy, which will create opportunities for course correction;
- The federal election in 2019 creates an opportunity to put greater focus on housing strategies that support ending homelessness and greater investment.

It's important that the homeless sector, advocates and activists, remain visible and engaged, pushing federal, provincial and territorial governments to make ending homelessness a priority. We should remain positive, but keep pressuring the federal government on the urgency of action, and for them to be resolutely focused on the outcomes in the National Housing Strategy. We must remind all levels of government that achieving the outcomes of the NHS should drive implementation of the strategy, which does not appear to be the case now.

Will the National Housing Strategy end homelessness in Canada? No. But it gives us a strong foundation to build on.

Mississauga resident Michelle Bilek is a Peel Community Advocate -- Homelessness and Housing, part of the Peel Alliance to End Homelessness, and a coordinator for the Canadian Alliance To End Homelessness.



Jessica Wang is a member of Peel Poverty Action Group and served on the Peel Food Security Task Force which designed the Peel Food Charter.

THE STORY BEHIND PEEL FOOD CHARTER

Hi there, have you eaten yet?

BY JESSICA WANG

Our current "food system" -- the network and interconnections of people, organizations, tasks and factors involved in food -- is not without issues. When we try to tackle the issues, we need to be mindful of interdependencies. Having a guide ensures the fixing doesn't make things worse. This is the purpose of the Food Charter. I grew up in a culture where people greet each other with "Have you eaten yet?" instead of "How are you?"... Eating is essential to life and having a full meal can bring a sense of wellbeing.

Regardless of cultural background, age, rich or poor, we all need to eat and it is something everyone can talk about.

But putting food on the table is neither easy nor simple.

Few of us grow our own food, so many others are involved in making sure we eat: from food growers like farmers, ranchers or fishermen, to people like truckers, sailors, pilots, who transport it, to people who prepare food -- butchers, millers, bakers, chefs -- to people who store and package it, to resellers, importers, exporters, inspectors. Much effort is expended by many

workers before food becomes available. And like us, the workers need to eat too. While some do well, others struggle to earn enough to eat.

Having food available doesn't mean it reaches our table. It depends on our being able to pay for it, getting to the store, finding food that is appropriate for our health. Once in our homes, food requires storage and preparation, electricity or gas or BBQ for cooking, and good teeth! Or the food can lose its freshness and go to waste, or more fortunately, compost!

Continued on next page

HOUSING FACTS AND FIGURES FROM PEEL REGION

Peel housing from the top down

Why is affordable housing an issue in Peel?

- One in five Peel residents lives in poverty, and affordable housing is in short supply;
- the cost of owning a home continues to be out of reach;
- vacancy rates are low; precarious employment is the new economic reality.

Peel continues to grow and change:

- Within 25 years, the population will grow from 1.4 million (2017) to almost two million; seniors (65+): 136,000 (2017) to 420,000;
- 17% (almost one in five) of Peel's residents live in poverty
- 1.4% rental vacancy rate;
- 7.3% of Peel's workforce is unemployed (Ontario = 6.5%);
- One in five Peel residents rent housing, but there were no private sector rental housing starts in 2016.
- 12,958 households are on the Region's centralized wait list for subsidized housing;
- The Region has realigned its investments to reduce wait times.

What is the Region's role in affordable housing?

The province says the Region is the service manager for housing and homelessness in Peel -- responsible for planning for affordable housing and for homelessness as well as facilitating service coordination, funding, and in some cases delivering these programs. The Region has agreements with the province for funding to fulfill this mandate.

The Region oversees about 20,000 affordable housing units, negotiating subsidized and low-end market rents and supplying rent supplements to help people keep their housing.

A priority is to provide affordable housing and increase affordable housing options for residents in need, especially supporting homeless people and those at risk of losing their homes.

We consider policy incentives in finance and planning that would encourage developers to partner in building new affordable housing.

We advocate for systems reform at federal and provincial levels that would provide new revenue to support middle income housing.



Some of the Regional Property levy is allocated to investments in increasing affordable housing options:

Peel increased funding in its 2017 Operating and Capital budget for affordable housing for new development, repairs, the needs of applicants on the Centralized Wait list, and for the homeless.

About 12 cents of every dollar of the Region's tax levy goes to housing and reducing homelessness.

How is the Region addressing the need for more affordable housing?

A Choice-Based Rent Program provides wait list applicants with rent subsidies to help them keep their housing and avoid uprooting their families.

A 10-year Peel Housing and Homelessness Plan aims to eliminate homelessness and provide a home for everyone in Peel. Check peelregion.ca/housing/housinghomelessness/

The Region has capacity building grants, Affordable Housing System Investment funding of \$166.5m for 2014-2018.

Current housing investments and initiatives:

- Funded 205 new units, owned by SHIP, at subsidized and low-end market rent to provide supportive housing for Peel residents: Hansen Road, Brampton;
- purchased 78 condo units: added new affordable stock efficiently and cost-effectively;
- partnering with Daniels Corporation to build 174 new affordable housing units in Mississauga – construction scheduled for mid-2018, occupancy April 2021;
- funding for 84 new units with Brampton Bramalea Christian Fellowship Inc.;
- Peel Renovates - Second Unit renovations: 26 applicants approved and \$630,000 allocated;

Working with Peel municipalities to build affordable housing:

- City of Brampton Seniors Housing Initiative;
- Mississauga Affordable Housing Program;
- Cost of Incentives report;
- Town of Caledon Seniors Task Force;
- Identify land for affordable housing.

Food Charter, continued from page 8

Other factors like weather, climate, pests, diseases, pollinators, pollutions, availability of farmland and water, or even market trends, trade deals, policies and more, impact our food.

So, what does a food charter have to do with this? Why spend the effort in Peel to come up with one?

Our current "food system" -- the network and interconnections of people, organizations, tasks and factors involved in food -- is not without issues. When we try to tackle the issues, we need to be mindful of interdependencies. Having a guide ensures the fixing doesn't make things worse. This is the purpose of the Food Charter.

Peel's Food Charter looks at the big picture of "food security" as defined by United Nations, with Peel's context. It was developed with inputs from more than 800 people in the community. (Big thanks to all who contributed their time and thoughts! This wouldn't have happened without you!) The resulting collective vision for Peel is summarized as

"a just, sustainable and secure food system for now and the future."

To achieve that, six themes are highlighted:

- Agriculture and economy;
- Community engagement and decision-making;
- Education and awareness;
- Environment and sustainability;
- Equity and social justice;
- Health and wellbeing.

A Food Action Council will be formed to help champion the vision and push for further action.

What challenges do you face now?

Is it a matter of equity because few affordable grocers are nearby? Is it awareness because food labels are difficult to understand? Or of community engagement because you feel something important is missing in the Charter?

You can take action. Tell a city councillor (or

ToughTimes) about your challenges and what you think should be done. Plan actions with friends. And make sure the Food Action Council remembers that 14% of Peel households could not afford to put food on the table (a situation referred to as "food insecurity")... which means more than 1 in 10 households needs help.

If you haven't eaten yet, I sincerely hope you will. Soon.

**Know your rights
@work**
Workshops every month
Phone 905-699-7444
Labour Community Services of Peel

Wheeling along on the bus



Brenda Murdoch has been crippled by arthritis since childhood and must use a walker everywhere she goes. She is currently living in a shelter, looking for an accessible place to live.

(Tough Times photo)



BY BRENDA MURDOCH

As a physically disabled woman, it's a good job that I'm not much of a gal about town.

I do, however, have the need to travel, to pick up necessities, or just get out and socialize.

If I travel by transit it is always an ordeal. Sometimes if I am not up to lifting my walker onto the bus, I'll ask the driver to put the ramp down, which most do with no problem.

One driver told me I had to be in a wheelchair to use the ramp.

I then informed the driver of which

stop I'd like to get off, explaining that there is no possible way for me to reach the dinger.

And how do you call something accessible if a disabled person can't reach the button when their stop is coming?

Most drivers do this with no problem, but several have told me to ask another passenger to do it for me.

Quite often, the disabled seats are filled with people who are not disabled. Instead of automatically getting up to give me a seat, I have to loudly say: "I need a seat!" which they begrudgingly do.

Unless you are physically disabled you wouldn't notice or realize how far bus stops and terminals are away from things.

At the Square One Terminal I have to walk almost the entire length of the

Terminal to get on an elevator so that I can then walk further just to get into the Mall.

The Gateway Shoppers World and City Centre terminals are so far away from the malls that I've certainly got no energy or likelihood of wanting to spend much money in either place.

And the Brampton Hospital has a convenient staircase -- not a ramp -- right to the bus shelter. So you have to walk quite a ways -- maybe 20 minutes -- to get to it.

I'm not sure who plans these things, and I'm always hearing about going green -- leave your car at home, take the transit.

Something needs to drastically change for the transit system to call itself accessible!

What is NAFTA afta?

BY ROSEMARY KEENAN

You have probably heard of NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and you may have heard that Canada, the U.S. and Mexico are re-negotiating this trade agreement. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, tells us that NAFTA is good for Canada.

Is it?

NAFTA was negotiated over 20 years ago and was the first trade agreement to include an Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) section, binding trade among developed nations, in this case Canada, the U.S. and Mexico. The ISDS, also referred to as Chapter 11, allows international corporations to sue local governments for lost profits if our federal or provincial government puts laws, regulations or practices in place to support health, safety, the natural

environment, local jobs, or human rights. Legislation that leads to perceived loss of profits for the foreign investor can be defeated by the ISDS.

How does this affect you and me? NAFTA and the 'corporate friendly'

policies that accompany it have resulted in the extensive loss of manufacturing jobs, the continuing rise in precarious work, low wage and short term employment, removal of environmental protections, and hesitation of our governments to establish health and safety regulations. International corporations seek to maximize their profits by moving to low-wage economies. (By the way, Mexican workers are also suffering, unable to

earn enough to support their families.) In addition, regulatory controls on industry are so weak that spills, toxins, pollutions, and environmental damage are making people sick.

"As documented by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Canada has been sued 39 times, more than Mexico or the U.S., the latter never having

lost a case yet. Canada has paid out more than \$215 million in compensation to American corporations, has spent more than \$65 million defending itself, and is currently facing another \$2.6 billion in challenges. Almost two-thirds of the claims against Canada have targeted our environmental regulations or resource

management policies." from *Getting it Right: A People's Guide to Renegotiating NAFTA*, by Maude Barlow.

Maude Barlow calls for removal of the Investor State Dispute Settlement clause, putting people at the centre of trade agreements, promoting regulations that protect the health and safety of workers and communities, protecting public services, and removing water as a tradeable commodity.

The Peel Chapter of the Council of Canadians joined trade union Unifor 1285, based in Brampton, calling for a trade agreement that focuses on people and communities. Similar rallies took place across Canada.

Rosemary Keenan is Chair of the Council of Canadians - Peel Chapter

NORTH PEEL & DUFFERIN Community Legal Services

- Free legal services for low income residents of Brampton, Caledon and Dufferin County
- Problems with your landlord?
- Is your rent subsidy threatened?
- Was your application for Ontario Disability Support Program benefits denied?
- Problems with Ontario Works?

905-455-0160 Toll Free from Dufferin 1-866-455-0160 npdinfo@lao.on.ca

Money – free for the asking

The Canadian government is ready to give \$2,000 to children in families that don't have the money to finance their kids' university or college education. The money will go into a Registered Education Saving Plan to be spent on post-secondary education.

The family is not required to contribute.

\$2,000 won't cover your total costs, but it's a start.

Find out more at 1-888-276-3624

ToughTomes

BY LAURA BILYEA, Librarian
Central Library, Mississauga

Tis the season to eat hearty but how do you do that without breaking the bank? Here are four books from your local library that celebrate food AND efficiency. These books focus just as closely on preparing delicious meals as they do on smart kitchen management in order to stretch your spending and improve the quality of your eating.

Well fed, flat broke : recipes for modest budgets and messy kitchens

Wight, Emily,

This collection of 120 recipes ranges from the simple (perfect scrambled eggs, rice and lentils) to the sublime (Orecchiette with White Beans and Sausage, Mustard-fried Chicken). Each chapter is organized by ingredient so that you can easily build a meal from what you have on hand. Well Fed, Flat Broke has flavours from around the world includ-

Eat well, but eat cheap



ing Thai, Dutch, Indonesian, and Latin American-inspired recipes reflecting a diverse array of affordable ingredients.

Keepers : two home cooks share their tried-and-true weeknight recipes and the secrets to happiness in the kitchen

Brennan, Kathy.

An array of master recipes for classic dishes with options for substitutions, updated old favorites, one-pot meals, "international" dishes, and others that reheat well or can be cooked in individual portions. Along with timeless recipes, Keepers is filled with invaluable tips on meal planning and preparation, all presented in an entertaining and encouraging style.

Waste free kitchen handbook : a guide to eating well and saving money by wasting less food

Gunders, Dana.

Scientist Dana Gunders shares everyday techniques that range from shopping, portioning, and using a refrigerator properly to simple preservation including freezing, pickling, and cellaring. This handy guide is chock-full of helpful facts and tips, including 20 "use-it-up" recipes and a substantial directory of common foods.

Save with Jamie

Oliver, Jamie,

Save with Jamie focuses on feeding your family healthily and economically, showing us the most delicious ways to stretch your family food budget further while still enjoying lots of flavour and good, healthy food. His charity, The Jamie Oliver Foundation, seeks to improve people's lives through food.

Eat well, save money, and see you at the Library!

Developmental Services Ontario, system failures and unmet needs

BY SARA SINGH

Individuals with disabilities are falling through the cracks of Developmental Services Ontario (DSO). Individuals, families, service agencies, advocacy groups, the Ombudsman, and a report by the Select Committee on Developmental Services, all raised concerns about long waitlists, lack of funding and disjointed processes for children and adults with developmental disabilities.

Yet little has changed since the release of three major reports, including the 2016 Ombuds *Nowhere to Turn*, clearly signalling a system in crisis.

In 2008, the Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, replaced the Developmental Services Act, laying the groundwork for transformation of developmental services. Although aimed at improving the lives of individuals with disabilities, numerous changers over the last nine years have left people with disabilities worse off. Service agencies and individuals are struggling to understand and keep up with new requirements that might enable them to access vital supports.

For example, when an individual turns 18, their supports for a caregiver, access to community services or programs ends. They must reapply to Developmental Services and complete

a new psychological assessment to qualify for funding. Once the application process is complete, individuals go on a waitlist to access supports and services. Some are on this waitlist for over three years, despite applying months in advance of their 18th birthday. The consequences have been dire. Individuals, their caregivers and advocates are increasingly frustrated in their struggle to gain the assistance they need to be included in the community.

Compounding the issue is the transition after high school into adulthood. Many students are graduating at 21 and leaving the school system, often with nowhere to turn. Research and grassroots initiatives have demonstrated that if people are properly supported through access to housing, supports, services, and caregivers, they can participate meaningfully in our communities. They have good lives, attain post-secondary education, acquire meaningful employment, engage civically. However, for many young adults, appropriate programs or opportunities to engage in their community are limited or not available. Once graduating high school, many are waiting for the supports they need to become the active members of the community they would like to be.

A lack of housing supports has also meant that residential services are limited and housing options are not suited

to real needs. Individuals with complex needs are even placed in Long Term Care centres and psychiatric wards because housing options or support services are not available. Families in crisis may abandon their loved ones at respite care facilities, begging for the help they need to take care of them.

Despite best intentions, the 2008 Act fails to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities. Advocates have raised concerns many times; families have launched class action lawsuits. In 2014, \$810 million dollars was given to the sector to improve outcomes, but much of it went to creating Band-Aid solutions, very little to helping individuals. While some families

have been removed from the waitlist with minimal government funding, more than 11,000 individuals across Ontario are still on a waitlist -- waiting for an opportunity to live a life they want and deserve.

Sara Singh is a PhD candidate in Public Policy at Ryerson University, researching access to inclusive post-secondary education for persons with intellectual disabilities. Self-advocates, family members and advocates can reach the program at sara.singh@broadeninghorizons.ca Phone 289-505-7646

Singh is running for the New Democratic Party in Brampton Centre in the Ontario election June 7 this year. Email sara.singh@ontariondp.ca



Need Help Paying for Child Care?

Families living in Peel region who need help with the cost of licensed child care for their children (up to 12 years old) can **apply for a Child Care Fee Subsidy** if they meet **eligibility requirements** and have a valid reason for care.

Eligible families could expect to pay:

Net Family Income	Daily Child Care Cost for Parents*
\$20,000	\$0.00
\$30,000	\$3.83
\$40,000	\$7.66
\$50,000	\$19.16
\$60,000	\$30.65
\$70,000	\$42.15

* The table shown is for illustration purposes only and is based on full time care.
Actual cost for your family will be calculated during the application process.

For full eligibility details or to use our child care fee subsidy estimator, please visit us at peelregion.ca/hsapply or call us at **905-793-9200**.

